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## ARTICLES:

(1) Pros and cons of prime minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine split the religious vote in last Upper House election

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
August 15, 2007

Prior to the anniversary of the end of the war on Aug. 15, the moves of religious groups in connection with the July Upper House election have been active. While Shinto-related religious groups have been urging Prime Minister Abe to visit Yasukuni Shrine to pay homage to the war dead on Aug. 15, Buddhists and other religious organization sent letters to the prime minister and cabinet members urging self-constraint on paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine. With the weakening of such organized support groups as the construction industry, the existence of religious groups with their vote-mobilization capability has steadily taken on increasing importance.

The Bussho Gonenkai Kyodan (membership of approximately 550,000 households), which has been urging the prime minister to officially pay homage at Yasukuni Shrine, supported two incumbent Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) candidates in the proportional representation segment of the House of Councillors' election. It linked with the Nihon Izoku-kai (Japan Association of Bereaved Families of the War Dead) to enhance its ability to gather votes. A source in the Kyodan stressed: "The proper activity of religious associations is to back established political parties."

Seiichi Eto, the postal rebel who had once left the LDP but was restored to the party prior to the Upper House election, received the recommendation of the conservative group, Nippon Kaigi (Japan

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Conference), which advocates the drafting of an independent constitution for Japan and the realization of official visits to Yasukuni Shrine by prime ministers. He also received support from a number of religious associations affiliated with the Nippon Kaigi. A source at one of those religious groups expressed its hopes: "Our chance came with the presence of Abe as prime minister. His thinking is close to ours, so we could jointly fall into step."

On the other hand, Shinshuren or the Alliance of New Religious Organizations, which consists of 69 Buddhist-affiliated sects, issued an opinion paper on Aug. 9 calling on the prime minister and his cabinet not to pay homage at Yasukuni Shrine. "The government should strictly refrain from involvement with specific religious facilities," the paper warned. It was presented to the government through the LDP. The same day, the paper went to the DPJ, as well.

Shinshuren in the Upper House election recommended two fresh candidates running from the DPJ in the proportional representation segment. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, it allocated some of its members' votes to the incumbent LDP candidate, as well.

In the district races, Shinshuren established its own criteria and recommended over 30 candidates from both the LDP and DPJ, based on the principle that it should not fall under one party or political group in accordance with freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

The trigger for many religious associations to have strengthened their ties to politics has been the Yasukuni Shrine issue. In the 1960s and '70s, a movement developed led by the Nippon Izokukai (Japan Association of the Bereaved Families of the War Dead), a political support organization of the LDP, to return Yasukuni Shrine under state control (like before the war), and the LDP even presented a bill to the Diet aimed at state protection for the shrine. This movement was sharply opposed by Buddhist-related religious associations and other religious groups, resulting in the bill being scrapped.

As a source in one affiliated organization noted, Shinshuren positioned the trend at that time this way: "By our involvement in politics, we forced the scrapping of the bill. That was our biggest

accomplishment in the past." The movement to obtain state protection for Yasukuni collapsed, and the focus of efforts by the group that had promoted such turned to bringing about prime ministerial visits to the shrine. But when opinion divided on that issue, a group emerged even in Shinshuren calling for withdrawal from that organization.

In the late 1990s, the Komeito (the party is now called New Komeito) received support of its sole religious supporter, the Soka Gakkai, and joined the ruling coalition with the LDP. However, within that religious organization, there seems to have been doubts about stances to take toward the administration. Nevertheless, since the party relied on the religious organization for getting out the vote, the political ties of that religious organization never weakened.

A senior official of the Shinto Seiji Renmei (Shinto Political Federation) stated: "For Shinto circles to achieve its goals, there are many cases where we have had to be concerned with laws. It is necessary to build strong channels to the Diet."

(2) What to do about structural reforms: "Revision is needed," urge

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Mori and others; Junior LDP members concerned about reform drive retreating

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
August 16, 2007

In connection with a cabinet reshuffle and the changing of the lineup of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) executive expected to take place on Aug. 27, what direction the structural reforms will take has become an issue. Following the crushing defeat of the ruling camp, veteran lawmakers have begun calling for a revision of the reform policy line adopted during the Koizumi administration. Junior lawmakers, however, are opposed to any notion of revising the existing line. Prime Minister Abe, who wants to regain public support, as well as to restore order to the government and the ruling camp, is under pressure to make a difficult decision.

Voices calling for a revision of the reform policy have begun gaining ground right after the LDP defeat in the Upper House election and erupted at bloc-by-bloc hearings of views held by the LDP Upper House election overview committee, which started on Aug. 17. Former Home Affairs Minister Takeshi Noda noted: "The government has lacked consideration for the socially vulnerable in terms of medical services and social security. If the structural reforms are carried out in the name of the continuation of the reform drive and the creation of a small government, they will be further impoverished." Former MEXT Minister Kenji Kosaka said, "The government has to come up with a stance of listening to the voices of people in the rural districts, farmers and medium and small business operators more carefully." In response to such views, former Prime Minister Mori, who is viewed as a guardian of the prime minister during an interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun on Aug. 10 urged the government to shift the focus of key policy themes, noting, "Policy themes closely related to people's lives should be adopted."

Those who voiced such a view were mainly senior and mid-level lawmakers. They seem to think that the LDP used to obtain support because it widely absorbed the views of people in rural districts. The structural reform policy, including the introduction of the market principles promoted by one time Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Heizo Takenaka during the Koizumi administration should be changed quickly."

In contrast, many junior party members are concerned about such a move with one noting, "If the image of the party spreads that it is retreating from reform, people would think that the party has transformed itself back to its former self. Should that occur, we would suffer a major setback in the Lower House election." The Dietmembers' Caucus for Reform Expedition consisting of junior and mid-ranking lawmakers on August 8 held a meeting at the party headquarters. Former State Minister for Declining Birthrate Kuniko Inoguchi during the meeting noted, "A mistaken conclusion is being

reached that the cause of the defeat of the LDP in the Upper House election was the Koizumi reform line."

Former Prime Minister Koizumi, who paved the way for the reform policy, has encouraged Prime Minister Abe, noting, "Reform cannot be achieved if the prime minister is replaced in a year or two. The prime minister should carry out reform to realize what the people expect him to do without being bothered by an election."

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Abe approved budget request guidelines for the fiscal 2008 budget, which inherited the Koizumi administration's fiscal reconstruction policy, dismissing pressure from the party that public works in rural districts should be boosted to correct social disparities. However, following the crushing defeat of the ruling bloc in the July Upper House election, Abe started to waver, telling an aide, "I wonder if the people might be tired of reform."

The prime minister's future policy on the policy issue will be reflected in the upcoming cabinet reshuffle and party executive selections.

During an interview on Aug. 10, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori indicated his readiness to approve a possible appointment of Taro Aso as secretary general, saying, "Foreign Minister Aso supported my view that a policy attaching importance to rural district should be adopted." He also revealed that he advised the prime minister that he should appoint to key posts former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, who has been distancing himself from Abe, and former Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki.

If the prime minister follows Mori's advice, he would be judged as having not only revised the reform policy line but also as having made concessions to the party side. Should that happen, he would lose more public support. In the meantime, Mori has a major impact in achieving intra-party appeasement, because he has channels with senior members of various factions. All eyes will now be on what judgments the prime minister will reach on Aug. 27.

(3) Interview with LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Toshihiro Nikai: Ruling party must reach out to opposition

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
August 16, 2007

-- One of the major reasons for the Liberal Democratic Party's big loss in the Upper House election was the inappropriate statements and money scandals surrounding cabinet members such as former Agricultural Minister Norihiko Akagi.

I must admit that while working on Diet affairs, (every time a new scandal came out) we would say to ourselves, "Here's another one." We suffered through it without a word, but it was just too much. Although our policies were meant to help, there were aspects that people did not fully understand. Right now, it is as if we are in a burnt field. We have no choice but to make efforts so we can show people a rejuvenated LDP.

-- The LDP had enjoyed heavy support in the single-seat districts until now. But this time, LDP candidates lost across the board in those same single-seat districts. Is this a revolt by voters tired of social disparity and problems with bread-and-butter issues?

It probably is a revolt. It is not that voters really support other parties. They wanted to make the LDP reflect on its actions. But it is important that we recover from this shock quickly without panicking. In the 1998 Upper House election, the LDP won 3 races and lost 23 in the single-seat districts. However in the Upper House election three years later, we made a big comeback. We must actively seek out the opinions and requests of the regions.

-- Criticism has been mounting towards Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's

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decision to stay in office not just from the voters, but also from within the LDP.

It is important for LDP members to stick together and support the prime minister. We cannot afford to drag our feet. It is easy to criticize. However in last year's LDP presidential election, we overwhelmingly supported Abe, so the blame falls on the LDP Diet members nationwide. Criticism alone will not move us forward.

-- What is important in the upcoming reorganization of the cabinet and the LDP executive posts?

Party unity is always important. The prime minister/LDP President has the power to make personnel choices, and we shouldn't be making comments from the sidelines. The prime minister should take decisive action after careful consideration. We should not constrict him with conditions.

-- The opposition parties have made Diet operations very difficult.

There is no magical solution. We will approach them with sincerity and cordiality.

The extension of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which is set to expire on November 1, fits into the idea of both the ruling and opposition parties feel that "the fight against terrorism is the most important issue for the international community." The ruling party must center all its efforts on convincing (the opposition parties) to agree to the extension.

-- There are predictions that the ruling party will face gridlock in Diet discussions.

We are not planning to take things easy by relying on the option of returning bills to the Lower House and getting them passed there. Even if the DPJ issues a series of censure motions, the people are watching. In order to increase government productivity, we must cooperate where cooperation is needed and revise when revisions must be made. The ruling party must take the initiative in creating lots of opportunities for both sides to talk. For this reason, the Diet session will probably be longer than usual.

-- Isn't DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa trying to force an early dissolution of the Lower House and a presidential election?

I wonder if the Japanese people will support that. The effects of the "Lost Decade" (TN: the "Lost Decade" refers to the period of prolonged economic stagnation during the 1990s following the burst of the bubble economy) can still be felt in the regions, in small and mid-sized companies and in the agricultural sector. It is important for both the ruling and opposition parties to introduce policies to deal with these problems. Now that they have earned a majority in the Upper House, the opposition parties have greater political responsibility. Even the DPJ cannot conduct Diet business in the same way that they had before.

-- When do you think the next Lower House election will be?

I don't see any reason to hurry.

(4) Interview with State Minister in Charge of Administrative and Regulatory Reforms Yoshimi Watanabe: Ruling and opposition parties

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must debate, find "landing site"

NIKKEI (Page 2)  
August 16, 2007

-- The Democratic Party of Japan has seized control of the Upper House.

"We must decide whether to simply respond to the current political situation or to take this as the first step towards Japan's future democratic maturation. We are at a fork in the road. If we just

respond to the political situation, the "Lost Decade" might return. (TN: the "Lost Decade" refers to the period of prolonged economic stagnation during the 1990s following the burst of the bubble economy)"

-- There was a similar situation in 1998 (when the ruling party at the time lost its majority in the Upper House). As a member of a new generation of policymakers, you moved to cooperate with the opposition on policy during the "financial Diet session." (TN: the "financial Diet session" refers to the 79-day extra Diet session held to deal with a banking crisis and to split the Finance Ministry.)

"It wasn't the best situation, but it was better than doing nothing and inducing a systemic risk (such as the successive bankruptcies of banking institutions). This time, we are not in emergency mode as we were in 1998, but if we go in the wrong direction with our national strategies and lean towards big government and socialist policies, Japan will become a third-rate Asian country."

-- The DPJ is thinking about reintroducing a bill to stem the practice of "amakudari." (TN: a system where senior bureaucrats retire to cushy executive positions in the private sector.) How will you respond?

"A revised bill regarding civil servants has been drafted and has entered the next phase. I would like the ruling and opposition parties to have a constructive debate and find a landing site. Many DPJ Diet members have come forth with progressive arguments regarding the political appointment (of civil servants) that are worth a closer look. I want to have discussions filled with forward-looking ideas. There is room in our discussions to consider transitionally placing restrictions on "amakudari" in independent administrative agencies (as well as national civil servants)."

-- The DPJ has criticized the public-private human resources exchange center (proposed in the LDP's "amakudari" bill) as being an "amakudari bank."

"The human resources exchange center is meant to take over job assistance services that the ministries now provide but this function will eventually come to an end. We will discuss whether the center will have a sunset clause (shut down after a certain amount of time) or whether it will be given other tasks and remain active."

-- What do you think would be a good way for the ruling and opposition parties to cooperate?

"The Diet is the frontline. The chairpersons of each Diet committee would assume the responsibility of aiming for cooperation on policy

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and not just on Diet affairs. It is necessary to place people well-versed in policy in important positions. People who are already serving in a government post, such as vice ministers or political advisors, can double as committee chairs."

(5) Interview with former DPJ Policy Research Committee Chair Yoshito Sengoku: Ozawa should make clear that he wants in order to be prime minister

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
August 16, 2007

-- What is the opinion of the public, as demonstrated by the results of the recent Upper House election?

"Voters felt a lot of uncertainty over the Abe administration's plans for the future of the country. The administration's response to the problems of the Social Insurance Agency is a great example of the Abe administration's lack of experience, and the voters instinctively picked up on that."

-- Yet Abe decided to remain in office.

"(His decision) will probably end up destroying the Liberal Democratic Party. There is a chance that the functions of government will be negatively affected and that bad things will happen. The markets of both the US and Japan are beginning to become turbulent. At a time when his ability to manage financial and economic crises is being questioned, how can Abe ignore criticisms and try to create another immature cabinet of friends? If he does not quit soon, the Japanese people will experience an unhappy future."

-- Wouldn't that be a plus for the DPJ?

"There is a good chance that it would (be a plus) in the end, but is that good for the wellbeing of the people? A realignment of the political world or the restructuring of the administration is fine, but members of the LDP must also come out and say: "Let's think of a way to create a solid pension system. Let's rethink the shape of Japanese politics, including how to change the Constitution."

-- The DPJ used to be called a motley collection of politicians but now it has gained unity.

"This is because (DPJ President) Ozawa has decided to go for the goal - the post of prime minister. However it is unclear whether he really would become premier (if the DPJ gained administrative power). He has an absolute unifying force, so he should just make it clear. He must make sure that his supporters do not feel any uncertainty."

-- On what should Ozawa be focusing?

"He should create a system in which young people feel that they truly want to be part of. The worst thing (that DPJ members) can do is give up on debating the issues because Ozawa has made a decision 'from above the clouds.'"

(6) DPJ to aim at obtaining single majority: Making efforts to form joint parliamentary group in bid to solidify its foothold to realize prior consideration by Upper House

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YOMIURI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)  
August 15, 2007

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) is making various approaches in a bid to obtain a majority in the Upper House on its own. It wants to completely secure leadership in the Upper House, a main battle field for it to attack the ruling parties, emerging from a situation where it falls short of a majority without cooperation from the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The DPJ forms a group called DPJ-Shinryokufukai in the Upper House with members with no party affiliation. The group has increased a membership to 112 with Toshiro Tomochika and Itsuki Toyama joining after the Upper House election. If seven JCP members and five from the Pro-Constitution Association are added, the DPJ could gain a majority of 122. However, it falls short of 10 seats to gain a majority on its own.

The DPJ is aiming at gaining a single majority in the Upper House, because it wants to make sure that its prior consideration by the Upper House strategy succeeds, meaning that it submit its own bill to the Upper House and secures approval, thereby applying pressure on the ruling parties,. It is sounding out the possibility of forming a joint parliamentary group with the People's New Party (PNP), which has four seats, and the New Party Nippon (NPN) with one seat. It is also trying to bring non-affiliated lawmakers into the fold.

The DPJ is giving priority to forming a joint parliamentary group with the PNP with four seats. In the extraordinary Diet session held after the Upper House election, it introduced a bill seeking a freeze on postal privatization jointly with the PNP, accepting its stance. Though the bill was scrapped, the DPJ plans to introduce it again in the next extraordinary Diet session.

The PNP remains cautious about the idea with one senior member saying, "We are recognized and have presence, as we are a separate party from the DPJ. If we merge with the DPJ, our existence would be at stake." However, a senior DPJ official is set for continuing soliciting the PNP to form a joint parliamentary group with the DPJ, saying, "The PNP can maintain independence, if it remains separate in the Lower House. It can form a joint parliamentary group with the DPJ only in the Upper House."

Yasuo Tanaka, head of the NPN and the only lawmaker in the party, elected in the Upper House election, does not belong to any group. When he met with DPJ head Ozawa on Aug. 2, he asked Ozawa, "If we were to form a parliamentary group, I would like to have an opportunity to ask questions at the Upper House Budget Committee." Since Ozawa understands his request, Tanaka could agree to form a joint parliamentary group with the DPJ in the next extraordinary Diet session.

There are six Upper House members who do not belong to any group, aside from the president, the vice president and Tanaka. The DPJ intends to ask them to join its group. Of the six, Daito Matsuura, who ran in the July Upper House election supported by the LDP and was elected, expressed his will to join the DPJ group in the next extraordinary Diet session. However, the SDP chapter in Akita Prefecture, his home constituency, is opposing the idea. It is unlikely that other lawmakers will smoothly decided to join the DPJ

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group because of their policy stance and relations with other opposition parties.

Some DPJ members take the view that if the DPJ forcibly tries to bring lawmakers who were elected, jointly supported by opposition parties, into the fold, it would leave a hard feeling and so, priority should be given to maintaining cooperative relationship in the run-up to the next Lower House election.

(7) Toshinori Shigeie picked ambassador to South Korea

ASAHI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)  
August 8, 2007

The government decided in a cabinet meeting on Aug. 7 to appoint a number of ambassadors, including Ambassador in charge Okinawan Affairs Toshinori Shigeie as ambassador to the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Ambassador to Laos Makoto Katsura as ambassador to the Philippines. The official announcements were made yesterday.

Ambassador to the ROK Toshinori Shigeie: Graduated from Hitotsubashi University and entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1969; ambassador in charge of Okinawan affairs from March 2006 to Aug. 24, 2007, after serving in such posts as director general of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau; age 62.

Ambassador to Bulgaria Tsuneharu Takeda: Graduated from Keio University and got hired by ITOCHU Co. in 1969; president of Central Engineering & Construction Co. from June 2005 through June 2007, after serving as ITOCHU board member in charge of the Kansai area; age 63.

Ambassador to the Netherlands Minoru Shibuya: Graduated from the University of Tokyo and joined MOFA in 1970; chief of protocol since March 2005, after serving as ambassador to Pakistan and other posts; age 60.

Ambassador to Panama Makoto Misawa: Graduated from the University of Tokyo and joined the then Construction Ministry in 1970; president of the Central Engineering and Construction Co. since November 2005, after serving in such posts as director general of the Housing Bureau; age 59.

Ambassador to Kenya Shigeo Iwatani: Graduated from Hitotsubashi University and entered MOFA in 1973; consul general in Honolulu since September 2005, after serving as minister at the embassy in Germany and other posts; age 56.



Ambassador to Qatar Yukio Kitazume: Graduated from Tohoku University and entered MITI in 1973; advisor to Nippon Export and Investment Insurance from April to July 2007, after serving in such posts as director general of the Patent Office's General Administration Department; age 56.

Ambassador to Guatemala Kazumi Suzuki: Graduated from Hitotsubashi University and joined MOFA in 1973; consul general in Barcelona since December 2003, after serving in such posts as minister at the embassy in Nepal; age 57.

Ambassador to the Philippines Makoto Katsura: Left the University of Tokyo in mid-course; joined MOFA in 1971; ambassador to Laos since July 2004, after serving in such posts as consul general in Geneva;

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age 59.

Ambassador to Burma (Myanmar) Yasuaki Nogawa: Graduated from Hitotsubashi University and joined MOFA in 1973; executive director of Agriculture and Livestock Industries since August 2005, after serving in such posts as consul general in Sydney; age 58.

Ambassador to Nepal Tatsuo Mizuno: Graduated from the University of Tokyo and Joined MOFA in 1973; general auditor of Nippon Automated Cargo Clearance System Operations Organization since September 2005, after serving in such posts as consul general in Auckland; age 59.

Ambassador to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan Tsutomu Hiraoka: Graduated from the University of Tokyo and entered MOFA in 1973; ambassador to Nepal since September 2004, after serving in such posts as consul general in Edinburgh; age 60.

Ambassador to Malaysia Masahiko Horie: Graduated from Osaka University and joined MOFA in 1973; ambassador to Qatar since July 2004, after serving in such posts as minister at the embassy in France; age 61.

Ambassador to Laos Masaaki Miyashita: Left Keio University graduate school in mid-course; entered MOFA in 1973; ambassador to Zambia since October 2004 and concurrently ambassador to Malawi since November 2004, after serving in such posts as consul general in Melbourne; age 60.

Chief of Protocol Yuichi Kusumoto: Graduated from Doshisha University and joined MOFA in 1971; ambassador Uzbekistan since July 2004 and concurrently ambassador to Tajikistan since August 2004, after serving in such posts as consul general in Khabarovsk; age 59.

(8) What is behind Abe's plan to meet son of war tribunal judge Pal despite possible reactions from US, Asia

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 24) (Full)  
August 16, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stayed away from Yasukuni Shrine yesterday, the anniversary of the end of World War II. But during his visit to India in late August, Abe is scheduled to meet the eldest son of the late Radhabinod Pal, who as a judge at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Trial) insisted that all the Class-A war criminals should be found not guilty. Abe will also meet a descendant of Subhas Chandra Bose, a hero in the Indian Independence Movement who was in communication with wartime prime minister Hideki Tojo. The meeting, which is seen as part of his policy of emerging from the postwar regime, is expected to evoke negative reactions from the United States and Asian countries. Despite such a possibility, why has he arranged the meeting?

Last October, Prime Minister Abe made these replies in House of Representatives Budget Committee meetings: "The Class-A war criminals were tried for crimes against peace, but that concept was formed at that stage"; and, "Historians should judge who should be held responsible for starting the war and to what extent they were.

The government is not in the position of handing down a judgment." But the prime minister is about to expose his historical views to a global audience by meeting with the relatives of Pal and Bose.

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NGO Peace Depo President Hiromichi Umebayashi cynically commented: "His act is tantamount to a politician rehashing arguments on the Tokyo Trial. He might be hoping to prove his historical views are correct."

Umebayashi indicated that the planned meeting might be taken as a move to deny Japan's responsibility for the war. Although the Tokyo War Crimes Trials carry only a political meaning for the US, there is hatred toward the war criminals among Asian peoples. They might take the meeting as showing the rising influence of those willing to revive what Japan used to be. "

Sophia University Professor Yoshinori Murai said: "Although it is inconceivable that an impact will appear immediately, the image of Japan being a peace-loving nation in the postwar period has changed over the past several years due to the dispatch of Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to Iraq and other reasons. I doubt that the prime minister's meeting with the relatives of Pal and Bose will work favorably for Japanese companies' operations overseas."

The Issaikai, a new rightist group, has held a Buddhist service for Bose on the anniversary of his death (Aug. 18) every year, defining him as a person who echoed Japan's just cause of the "Greater East Asia War." Because of this, President Kimura welcomes the prime minister's meeting with Bose's son, saying: "The meeting probably will be a historic stage for the prime minister to show that he has not forgotten his old friends and that the winner in Asia that achieved economic growth also has a kind heart. The meeting is not bad, in light of Japan emerging from the postwar regime." But he added that he did not think the timing was proper.

Kimura speculated: "If he had contacted such persons even before he became prime minister, the meeting would not appear to be abrupt to me. The idea of meeting them might have emerged at someone's suggestion with the aim of recovering the devastating loss he suffered in the July House of Councillors election."

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa declined the request made by US Ambassador Schieffer after the Upper House election to support the government's plan to extend the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. This refusal raised Ozawa's reputation. Some observers see a sense of rivalry behind the prime minister's decision to meet the descendents of Pal and Bose.

Professor Murai made this critical comment: "He is unmindful of what part of his policy was rejected by the voters and why he suffered the crushing defeat in the earlier election. He is quite insensitive. If he decided to meet the relative of Pal in order to avoid criticism from China over the Yasukuni Shrine issue, he is completely blind to Asia."

MESERVE